

new products

As ever, there are some great new gadgets on the market this month, so you might want to consider adding some to your home or office setup. To help you sort the duff from the desirable, we share our views on some of the more interesting product releases

Mimio Xi

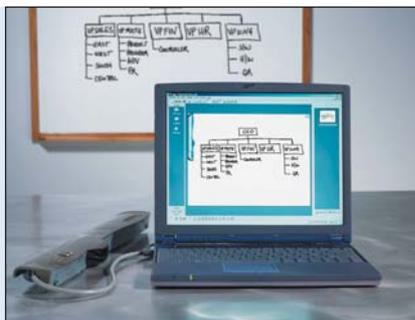
Virtual whiteboard system

Virtual Ink's Mimio system is a way of turning a whiteboard, or essentially any drawing surface, into an electronic whiteboard. Using a normal marker in a special case, the Mimio tracks the markers' movements within a 4x8ft area and records them, sequentially, as a virtual drawing. This latest Mimio, the Xi, goes a stage further, with onboard memory that frees it from the PC. This means anyone using it can draw, or teach, without the need of a PC or laptop. Notes can also be printed independently of a PC. When connected to a projector and a PC it can be used as a transparent mouse pad, or a rather remote mouse. And at £600, it's a lot cheaper than an electronic whiteboard.

Virtual Ink: 0870 458 3344

Website: www.europe.mimio.com

Price: £599 inc VAT



Fujitsu Siemens Pocket Loox

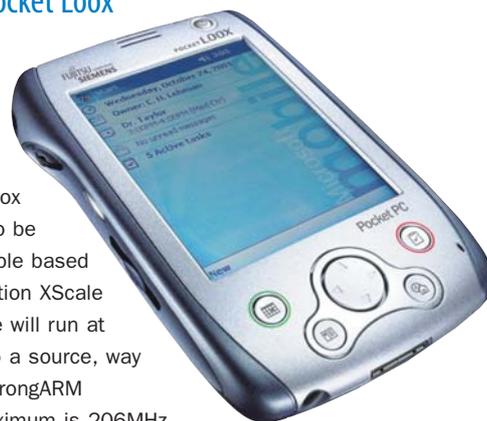
XScale-equipped PDA

Fujitsu Siemens' PDA (personal digital assistant), dubbed the Pocket Loox for now, looks likely to be the first device available based on Intel's next-generation XScale processor. The XScale will run at 300MHz, according to a source, way over Intel's fastest StrongARM processor, whose maximum is 206MHz.

The PDA should come with native support for Bluetooth and feature an expansion slot for a separately sold GPRS (general packet radio service) card. Built-in Bluetooth support is welcome and relatively new, with Compaq's top iPaq being one of the few devices that has it today. The device, expected to be priced similarly to PDAs based on Microsoft's Pocket PC 2002, will initially be available in Europe only. Expect more from the upcoming CeBit show in Germany.

Website: www.fujitsu-siemens.com/cebit/

Price: TBA



Creative Labs SoundBlaster Extigy

External sound card

Creative Labs' first external sound card, the Extigy, comes with USB connectivity so it can be used with notebooks or desktops. Its external installation makes it a quick and easy upgrade with no fumbling around inside your PC. It also promises to satisfy a variety of needs with its 100dB signal-to-noise ratio, 24bit/96KHz connectivity and the wide range of ports in the front and rear panel giving more flexibility. The card can be used with DVD movies, digital music and everyday gaming via analogue or digital surround sound speakers. It is supplied with a remote control, for extra laziness, and software and drivers which promise to make it extremely easy to manage. The Extigy can also function as a standalone device; in this mode it can be used as a digital decoder for a set-top DVD or to provide surround sound for a games console, such as the Xbox.

Website: www.europe.creative.com

Price: £149.99



HP zt 1000 range

Notebooks

This slimline blue and silver notebook range weighs from just 2.4kg without the CD-ROM drive inside – light enough, HP hopes, to carry anywhere. All the zt 1000s include an integrated V90 56K modem and a 10/100 LAN port, and the higher-end models incorporate a removable DVD-ROM/CD-RW and a FireWire video port to allow you to download copyright-free material from the internet and then watch or play it directly on your notebook. Special design features include blue backlit keys, an extra scroll touchpad and trackpad on/off button for cursor control. Speakers have been cunningly relocated to just above the keyboard to improve sound quality and there are three USB ports for easy connection of peripherals. For a look at the zt 1121s, turn to the Budget notebooks chart on page 116.

Website: www.hp.com

Price: £999 to £1,499

